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Senate

The Senate met at 10:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JACKY ROSEN, a Senator from the State of Nevada.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Precious Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations, sustaining us with Your goodness and mercy. Today, surround our Senators with the protection of Your divine favor, enabling them to obey Your command to be productive.

Lord, continue to strengthen them to follow Your precepts, fulfilling Your purposes as they find joy in Your presence. Keep them from the things that bring regret. Increase their faith, providing them with courage to live for Your glory.

We pray in Your strong Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, July 29, 2021.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JACKY ROSEN, a Senator from the State of Nevada, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Ms. ROSEN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, well, as we all know, last night, the Senate voted by a substantial margin to move forward with a debate on a bipartisan infrastructure bill. I want to commend the group of Senators who worked with President Biden to reach a deal. The agreement will ultimately dedicate over a trillion dollars to strengthening virtually every major category of our country's fiscal infrastructure.

The vote last night also means that the Senate is on track to reach the two-track goal I laid out for this Chamber at the beginning of the month. The first track is the bipartisan bill focused on traditional, brick-and-mortar infrastructure projects. The second track is a budget reconciliation bill where Democrats will make historic investments in American jobs, American families, and efforts to fight climate change.

In order to start work on a reconciliation bill, the Senate must pass a budget resolution first, and we are on track for that as well.

It has been my goal to pass both the bipartisan infrastructure bill and a budget resolution during this work period. Some pundits have called that a tall order. I understand that. But because of the vote last night, the Senate

is now moving forward with the bipartisan infrastructure bill, and we are on track to pass both elements of the two-track strategy before we adjourn for the August recess. It took some prodding and a few deadlines, but it all has worked out for the better.

I want to take a step back and explain why these two bills are so important at this moment. For the past 2 years at the end of the Trump Presidency, the country was angry, divided, plagued by COVID, and our economy was stuck in the muck. The COVID washed over our country like a plague and was met by staggering incompetence from the Trump administration. America was sick, dying, and our economy was in shambles.

The discovery of the vaccine played no small part in our country's recovery. We Democrats pushed early on, last February and March—not this past one but a year ago—to increase funding for BARDA. Even then, the Trump administration was sort of being stingy about that money, but we got the money done. And the vaccine, as I said, played no small part in our country's recovery.

But elections have consequences. I say that to the American people. Elections have consequences. When we ran as Senate Democrats, when President Biden ran, we promised we would get the vaccines out; we would get the country's economy moving again; we would give hope to the middle class and those struggling to get to the middle class, where hope had been a distant and hazy frame on their horizon previously.

The Biden administration came in. We came in as a Senate majority. We immediately set to work beating the pandemic, with a relentless focus on getting the country vaccinated and getting our country back to normal.

Congressional Democrats swiftly passed the bold, strong American Rescue Plan, one of the largest Federal packages in American history, to keep

• This “buller” symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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families, businesses, and workers afloat until the country could reopen. And we have done that. Six months into the Biden administration and Democratic majorities in the House and Senate, the country has stabilized.

This morning—this morning—it was reported that in the second quarter, the U.S. economy grew at a rate of 6.5 percent, erasing all of the losses from the COVID pandemic. It happened a lot quicker and a lot sooner than many anticipated.

Let me repeat that because it is great news. Under President Biden and Democratic House and Senate majorities, the economy recovered so fast this year that we have already erased the losses in growth that we experienced as a result of the COVID pandemic. That is very good news.

It certainly doesn't mean every family is back on their feet yet. It certainly doesn't mean our work is complete. But the American economy is back. It is thriving and set for even brighter days ahead.

Again, elections have consequences. There is such a difference between the bumbling, nasty, divisive last 2 years of the Trump administration and a new Democratic majority in the House and the Senate and a Democratic President.

Vaccines are out there, as we promised to get them. There are still some people resisting taking a vaccine. They should. We have had some resistance even from ideological rightwingers, which is just awful. Vaccines are out there.

Money has been pumped into the economy through the ARP, and things are moving forward, but now is not the time to rest on our laurels. Now is the time to press forward to cement these gains and build on them. We must continue encouraging vaccinations. We must keep a very close eye on the Delta variant and take necessary precautions. But we also must address the underlying structural economic conditions that held back the middle class and those trying to get there even before the pandemic.

The American dream—that if you work hard, you will be doing better 10 years from now than you are doing today and your kids will be doing still better than you—was fading for the last 20 years. If you look at the economic statistics, they show that that dimmer view the American people had was accurate in terms of economic circumstances.

But now we need to get bright and sunny again. We need to return to the bright, sunny American optimism that has been so much a part of our character for more than two centuries. And how do we do it? We don't just sit on our hands. We don't just say: Let businesses take care of it. They won't. They have a different mission.

A massive investment in public infrastructure will create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs. That is just what the doctor ordered. And we need to go

beyond that to restore that bright, sunny optimism. We need to help American families keep up with the exorbitant costs of childcare, healthcare, housing, college, and more. We need to press on and fight to reverse climate change because, as bad as COVID was, if we do nothing about climate change, a few years from now, each year will be worse than COVID, and each year after that will get worse and worse and worse. If we do nothing, people several years from now—even people now will say: Why didn't we do more? We Democrats want to do more on climate. We must.

The numbers show that the American economy has gotten back to where it was prior to COVID. Now is the time to go further and build back even better than before. We Democrats, when we can in a bipartisan way but on our own when our Republican colleagues are adamantly against us, we will move forward on both tracks—both tracks.

I am proud of my Democratic caucus, every one of them voting yesterday for this bill and all pledging to go forward on the second track as well.

CAPITOL SECURITY

Mr. SCHUMER. Madam President, on another matter, even during normal times, protecting the U.S. Capitol is a difficult job. Millions of people visit the U.S. Capitol every single year. Five hundred and thirty-five elected officials and their staffs work here every single day. To keep the Capitol Complex safe, to keep it secure, we are lucky to have the best of the best.

Our Capitol Police, who stared down a violent mob on January 6, have been nothing short of heroic—heroic. When the smoke cleared after the attack of January 6, they came back to the Capitol and helped piece together what the rioters had torn apart. In the aftermath of that dark day, the National Guard helped keep watch day and night, 24-7.

I walked the halls of this building early in the morning and saw our National Guard men and women, from New York and so many other States, camped out, helping us, wanting to make sure the Capitol was secure. We owe the Capitol Police and we owe the National Guard our deepest gratitude, but we owe them more than just that. We owe them the resources they need to do a very difficult job and to do it well.

Unfortunately, Congress is on the precipice of failing. Due to unforeseen expenses during the pandemic and the toll incurred by the attack on January 6, funding for our Capitol Police, security at the Capitol Complex, even our National Guard, has come close to running very dry.

Already, the Capitol Police has had to delay vital trainings and the purchase of new safety equipment. Soon, salaries, bonuses, and new hiring will be on the chopping block. According to MG Tom Carden, who sent 1,200 mem-

bers of the Georgia National Guard to the Capitol after January 6, his unit is facing “draconian” cuts if Congress doesn't replenish funding before this weekend. We must not—we must not—let that happen under our watch.

The chairman of the Appropriations Committee, Senator LEAHY, has been working diligently to come up with a bipartisan agreement. Now, Senator SHELBY has joined with him, and they have crafted a \$2.1 billion supplemental appropriations bill to fill the shortfalls of our Capitol Police, our National Guard, and a number of other vital defense operations. It is not everything that we wanted. The House's bill is bigger and broader. But it does fill the need, and we need to fill it quickly.

I want to thank Senator LEAHY particularly for his relentlessness in pursuing this.

I want to thank Senator SHELBY for realizing how important this was in prodding Members on his side of the aisle to move forward.

I also want to thank Senators KLOBUCHAR and BLUNT, chairmen of the authorization committee, the Rules Committee, that deals with these issues. Senator KLOBUCHAR in particular, whose hearings and continued focus on Capitol security helped pave the way for the agreement, deserves our kudos.

Now is the time for the Senate to take up and pass this bill on behalf of the brave police officers and servicemembers who defended this very citadel of democracy.

All 50 Senate Democrats fully support this crucial police and security funding. All 50 Democrats are ready to go. We are eager, insistent we meet our deadline.

Again, Democrats are prepared to vote on this bill as soon as possible. With the cooperation of our Republican colleagues, which we hope we will get—our needs are dire—we could pass this bill today.

The last 6 months have pushed those who protect the U.S. Capitol to the limits. In the face of unprecedented adversity, they responded heroically. We must support them now as they so courageously supported us.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, yesterday, I joined a number of my Republican and Democratic colleagues